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Cuban 'Invasion' Highly Overrated

Elsewhere on this page today, reporter James N. Wallace gives a penetrating analysis of a key factor that led the world, and ourselves, to the erroneous assumption that the United States had failed miserably in a full-scale invasion attempt against Cuba.

As Mr. Wallace's report indicates, what took place in Cuba was in reality a relatively minor effort by a few hundred Cuban exiles, who, it is true, were given guns, money and advice by the United States.

Fidel Castro just a few years ago launched the same sort of "invasion" of Cuba, having received aid from groups in Mexico, Venezuela and the United States. His forces launched their "invasion" from Mexico, and Castro suffered at least a dozen defeats at the hands of Batista's army. He managed to slip into the Escambray mountains with a few of his motley colleagues, from which he mounted his revolutionary movement that eventually toppled the Batista regime. Yet Cuba at the time was not a battleground between communism and freedom and the world press gave Castro's "invasion" hardly a paragraph on Page 10.

President Kennedy has aptly stated

that from the recent sobering episode, there are "useful lessons for all to learn." In this light, the administration has launched a top level study of the super-secret Central Intelligence Agency and America's future role in problems similar to Cuba. There is yet another lesson from which the U.S. could profit. It would seem that the American press — the Morning News included since our own news-gathering service, the Associated Press, was among the agencies which conveyed exaggerated invasion claims — has played into the hands of the enemy, unwitting and innocent though it may have been.

We certainly would never advocate peacetime news censorship. Nor would we witness such an attempt without vigorous protest. At the same time, in the twilight of the Cold War, the responsibility in reporting news involving national security should carry even more obligation to a free press than ordinarily.

As the Christian Science Monitor has noted, Americans cannot expect the world to correctly assess their acts and intentions until they themselves assess them with less exaggeration and with more equanimity.